

Message Text

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O R 092314Z NOV 73 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USLO PEKING IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 221869

TOSEC 335

E.O. 11652:

TAGS:UR, CH, PFOR, PINR

SUBJECT:SUMMARY OF INR IN ON STATUS OF L.F. IL'ICHEV AND
SINO-SOVIET TALKS IN PEKING

1. IDENTIFICATION OF DEP FORMIN L.F. IL'ICHEV IN
ACTIVITIES UNRELATED TO HIS DUTIES AS CHIEF SOVIET NEGOTI-
ATOR IN PEKING POINTS TO HIS POSSIBLE REASSIGNMENT AFT
THREE DIFFICULT YEARS OF NEGOTIATING BORDER AND OTHER
PROBLEMS WICH CHINESE OR TO LENGTHY ADJOURNMENT OF PEKING
TALKS. IL'ICHEV, IN MOSCOW SINCE MID-JULY, RECENTLY
REPORTED BY SOVIET MEDIA AS PARTICIPATING IN TALKS BETWEEN
PODGORNY AND HAILE SELASSIE AND AS PRESENT AT AIRPORT
NOVEMBER 2 TO GREET DRV DELEGATION HEADED BY PHAM VAN DONG.
ALSO POSSIBLE IL'ICHEV'S ACTIVITIES ARE INTENDED TO REMIND
CHINESE THAT IF PEKING TALKS IMPASSE CONTINUES, HE CAN BE
EMPLOYED MORE USEFULLY IN MOSCOW.

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2. CURRENT STATUS OF TALKS. JUDGING BY CURRENT RE-

PORTS, PEKING TALKS EITHER ADJOURNED DURING IL'ICHEV'S PROLONGED ABSENCE OR CONTINUING ON TECHNICAL LEVEL WITHOUT PROSPECT OF EARLY RESULTS. RECENT EVIDENCE SUGGESTS ONE DIFFICULT ISSUE AT TALKS HAS BEEN QUESTION OF AGREEMENT ON PRECONDITIONS, REQUIRED BY CHINA PRIOR TO DEMARCATION OF AGREED BORDER. CHOU EN-LAI'S CLAIM THAT KOSYGIN AGREED TO SUCH PRECONDITIONS DURING DRAMATIC MEETING AT PEKING AIRPORT SEPTEMBER 1969 IN WAKE OF CONFLICT ON USSURI

RIVER RECENTLY REITERATED BY CHOU TO SULZBERGER OF NYTIMES. ACCORDING TO CHOU, AGREEMENT INVOLVED THREE-POINT FORMULA: (1) WRITTEN PROVISIONAL ACCORD ON MAINTENANCE OF STATUS QUO PENDING CONCLUSION OF PERMANENT BORDER SETTLEMENT: (2) AVOIDANCE OF ARMED CLASHES AND MUTUAL WITHDRAWAL OF MILITARY FORCES FROM BORDER: AND (3) NEGOTIATION OF NEW REALIGNMENT OF BORDER. CHOU CONTENDED SOVIETS REFUSED TO RESPECT THIS AGREEMENT OR EVEN TO RECOGNIZE EXISTENCE OF DISPUTED AREAS. SOVIET MEDIA IN REPORTING SULZBERGER-CHOU INTERVIEW CAREFULLY AVOIDED REFERENCE TO CHOU'S VERSION OF 1969 UNDERSTANDING WITH KOSYGIN. SOVIET VERSION OF CHOU-KOSYGIN TALKS, AS GATHERED FROM VARIETY OF SOURCES, MATERIALLY DIFFERS FROM CHINESE VERSION, SKIRTING ENTIRELY QUESTION OF PRECONDITIONS. ALSO SOME EVIDENCE THAT IN RECENT MONTHS BOTH MOSCOW AND PEKING HAVE CIRCULATED THEIR RESPECTIVE VERSIONS OF ISSUES INVOLVED IN PEKING TALKS TO NUMBER OF GOVERNMENTS AND COMMUNIST PARTIES.

3. USSR SOFTENS STAND ON BORDER ISSUES. SOME REPORTS SUGGEST THAT PEKING TALKS RECENTLY FOCUSED ON RIVER BORDER EAST OF MONGOLIA. IN LINE WITH EARLIER INDICATION PRAVDA OBSERVER YURI ZHUKOV TOLD SOVIET TV AUDIENCE OCTOBER 20 THAT SOVIE SIDE PROPOSED USING MAIN NAVIGABLE CHANNELS OF AMUR AND USSURI RIVERS AS BORDER LINE. THIS WOULD REPRESENT SOVIET CONCESSION, GIVEN LONG STANDING SOVIET (AND PRE-REVOLUTIONARY RUSSIAN) CONTENTION THAT RIVERINE BORDER FOLLOWS CHINESE BANK OF RIVERS. IN RARE PUBLIC ADMISSION, SOVIET CHINESE-LANGUAGE COMMENTARY CONCEDED OCTOBER 30 THAT "OF COURSE, SOME CHANGES AT POINTS ALONG ALMOST 7,500 KILOMETER SOVIET-CHINESE BORDER MAY

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BE CALLED FOR TO DRAW CLEAR LINE OF DEMARCATION."

4. SEEMING CONTRADICTION BETWEEN REPORTS ON PROCEDURAL CONFLICT AND THOSE INDICATING DISCUSSION OF RIVER BORDER MAY BE MORE APPARENT THAN REAL, SINCE CONFLICT OVER PRINCIPLE AND PROCEDURE DOES NOT RULE OUT DISCUSSION OF SPECIFIC ISSUES AT TECHNICAL LEVEL. ALSO NOT CLEAR WHETHER SUDDEN DISPLAY OF PUBLIC CONCILIATION AND CONCESSION RE

BORDER RECTIFICATION REFLECTS ACTUAL SHIFT IN SOVIET NEGOTIATING POSITION AT TALKS.

5. WHEN THESE DEVELOPMENTS ARE ADDED TO OTHER COMPLEX STRANDS OF SINO-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT MOSCOW CONTINUES PAINFUL GROPING TOWARD SOME ADJUSTMENT OF ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH CHINESE. USSR HAS EXPRESSED READINESS TO DEFER TO PEKING INSISTANCE ON BARING RELATIONS ON PRINCIPLES OF PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE, EVEN THOUGH THIS IS IDEOLOGICALLY UNACCEPTABLE BASIS FOR RELATIONS BETWEEN

SOCIALIST STATES AND REPRESENTS STEP TOWARD PLACING PEKING OUTSIDE BOUNDS OF SOCIALIST COMMUNITY. MOSCOW ALSO SHOWS DISCOMFITURE OVER CONTRADICTIONS AND COMPLICATIONS OF CONDUCTING COLD WAR WITH PEKING WHILE SEEKING DETENTE WITH US. PEKING, ON OTHER HAND, SEEMS WILLING FOR THE RELATIONSHIP TO CONTINUE IN ITS PRESENT STATE. RUSH

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